

working to strengthen the community that warmly welcomed them many years ago.

Wine is a reflection of people and place, and it is with great pleasure that today we recognize the Drouhin Family of Burgundy and Oregon. Please join me in thanking the Drouhin Family for their enormous contributions to the Oregon wine industry. I look forward to their next 30 years, and more, of work in and on behalf of the Oregon wine industry.

# NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2018

SPEECH OF

**HON. BRENDAN F. BOYLE**

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, July 12, 2017*

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2810) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2018 for military activities of the Department of Defense and for military construction, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes:

Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Chair, I would like to address Section 131 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2018.

Last week, I filed amendment No. 247 on this matter; however I have since withdrawn the amendment given that the USAF has moved swiftly to replace the UH-1N fleet through an open and competitive process with the recent launch of the RFP.

The UH-1N replacement program is a priority for the Air Force and for many members

of this Congress, House and Senate. This is for good reason. The UH-1N accomplishes two vital national security missions—nuclear missile security and continuity of government. Over a decade has passed since our Air Force identified the need to replace the aging Vietnam-era UH-1N Huey fleet.

Following collaborative efforts between the Air Force and industry, including meetings and additional requests for information, the Air Force has now released its final Request for Proposal which begins the process of replacing the UH-1N fleet and ensuring a fair and open competition. Unfortunately, language contained in the H.R. 2810, the National Defense Authorization Bill for Fiscal Year 2018, threatens to upend this fair, competitive and open process by pushing a sole-source contract at the taxpayer's expense. Section 131 would allow the Air Force to sole-source the replacement of the UH-1N helicopter.

Frankly, I find this language appalling. The Department of Defense's Better Buy Power 3.0 directive states, "Real competition is the single most powerful tool available to the Department to drive productivity." The Federal Acquisition Regulations clearly articulate the importance of competition to satisfy cost, quality and timeliness aims. Competition is essential to maintaining a healthy industrial base. In Congress, we should be encouraging the Department of Defense to remain committed to competition.

Congress has repeatedly supported and directed a fair and open competition for the replacement of the UH-1N; yet, the language in Section 131 goes against congressional and Air Force efforts to ensure an open and fair competition. Given the fact that responses to the RFP will be due prior to the FY18 NDAA's completion, changing course from a fair and

open competition to a sole-source procurement at this time would limit options, create more delays, increase costs for taxpayers, and potentially impact mission requirements. There is also no justification for a sole-source contract of helicopters when multiple candidate aircraft, including commercial aircraft built cost effectively here in the United States on existing, hot production lines, can be leveraged in support of this mission.

In 2016, twelve Members of Congress signed on to a letter in support of a UH-1N replacement competition, which was instrumental in moving the Air Force towards its current strategy. We must allow the Air Force to continue their competition to replace their UH-1N aircraft and accelerate their ability to field new aircraft without further delay in the interest of national security. We should applaud and support the Air Force for moving forward with replacing the fleet of UH-1N not force them to stop and change course. Changing course from a fair and open competition to a sole-source procurement would create more delays, increase costs, and potentially impact mission requirements.

We cannot let this happen to the Airmen of our nation.

I applaud the Air Force in moving forward with replacing its fleet of UH-1N aircraft that help ensure the security of our land-based nuclear forces. Taking any other path would further jeopardize this critical program.

While I have withdrawn my amendment, I will be working to ensure this language is removed from the final bill during conference. Mr. Chair, replacing these assets is long overdue and I look forward to working with the Chairman and Ranking Member on this and other Air Force priorities.